

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 11138

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOR AMBASSADOR ELIOT FROM BYROADE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJECT: AFGHAN-PAKISTAN RELATIONS - SPECIAL PAKISTAN EMISSARY

REF: KABUL 8698

1. AS A MATTER OF POLICY, I CERTAINLY DO NOT INTEND TO TURN DOWN EACH AND EVERY REQUEST ON CASES WHERE THE AFGHANS THINK I MIGHT BE USEFUL HERE. THE TIMING OF THIS REQUEST IS EMBARRASSINGLY LATE, HOWEVER, FOR ME TO TRY TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. I HAVE NO CALLS SCHEDULED DURING WHICH IT MIGHT BE SLIPPED IN NATURALLY AND WOULD BE HESITANT TO MAKE URGENT SEPARATE DEMARCHE ON THIS ISSUE.

2. FURTHERMORE, WAHID ABDULLAH I FEAR DIDN'T GIVE US QUITE THE WHOLE STORY. WHEN I SAW POPAL THE OTHER
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DAY, HE REFERRED TO THIS PROBLEM, BUT MY MESSAGE WAS

ALREADY TOO LONG AND I DID NOT REPORT IT. POPAL SAID THE PAKISTANIS HAD ASKED HIM TO SECURE APPROVAL FOR THE VISIT OF MUMTAZ ALI BHUTTO TO KABUL. HE HAD INFORMED KABUL RIGHT AWAY BUT HAD NEVER RECEIVED A REPLY. HE BROUGHT IT UP WITH ME AS HE THOUGHT IT STRANGE THAT THE MATTER OF THE VISIT APPEARED IN THE PAKISTAN PRESS PRIOR TO HIS RECEIVING ANY REPLY WHICH HE COULD PASS ON TO THE PAKS. I ASKED HIM WHAT HE THOUGHT M.A. BHUTTO'S MISSION WOULD BE, AND HE REPLIED HE HAD BEEN INFORMED OF NO MISSION OTHER THAN THAT CONNECTED WITH THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE.

3. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, WHICH SHOWS THAT POPAL WAS PROPERLY USED AS INITIAL CHANNEL ON THIS SUBJECT, I DON'T REALLY SEE WHY ABDULLAH SHOULD TRY TO SHIFT IT TO ME. PERHAPS A CLUE MAY BE FOUND IN THE RECENT MESSAGE REPORTING MY TALK WITH POPAL. DON'T LIKE THE IMPLICATIONS.

4. WHAT WE HAVE HERE, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS A MIX OF AFGHAN SUPER-SENSITIVITY AND THE RATHER ABRUPT MANNER IN WHICH THE PAKS HAVE HANDLED THIS MATTER. CERTAINLY THE GOP SHOULD HAVE SEEN TO IT THAT THE MATTER DID NOT GET PRESS EXPOSURE PRIOR TO A REPLY. I WOULD CERTAINLY DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THE PAKS DID THIS DELIVERATELY TO TRY TO INSULT THE AFGHANS AS THAT WOULD SEEM TO BE COMPLETELY POINTLESS.

5. BHUTTO HAS BEEN SENDING ENVOYS ON MISSIONS CONCERNING THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE HURRIEDLY IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS ALL OVER THE MOSLEM WORLD. MY GUESS IS THAT HE DECIDED TO SEND HIS COUSIN TO KABUL SO THAT THE AFGHANS WOULD NOT FEEL LEFT OUT OF ALL THESE ROUNDS OF CONSULTATION. IF THIS INDEED IS THE MOTIVE, IT IS TOO BAD THAT AFGHAN SENSITIVITY AND PAK TACTICS WOULD APPEAR TO MAKE IT COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. BUT IT DOES SEEM THE AFGHANS ARE BEING A BIT TOO SENSITIVE. AFTER ALL, THE PAK EMMISSARIES HAVE HARDLY BEEN OF SUCH RANK THAT THE FORMALITIES OF STATE VISIT NEED BE OBSERVED.

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6. WE HAVE HAD PLENTY OF OCCASION IN THE PAST TO WITNESS BHUTTO ACTING ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT. BHUTTO TOLD ME HIMSELF THAT ON A RECENT TRIP WITH HIS STAFF RETURNING HERE FROM TEHRAN HE STARTLED THE LATTER BY SUDDENLY SAYING TO THEM "WHY DON'T WE MAKE AN UNEXPECTED STOP AT KABUL." HE SAID HIS STAFF WAS HORRIFIED AT THE THOUGHT AND HE DROPPED

IT. GOD KNOWS WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF HE HAD LANDED IN KABUL, BUT OBVIOUSLY HE WOULD NOT SO EXPOSE HIMSELF PERSONALLY IF HE THOUGHT IT WOULD MAKE THINGS WORSE. AS A PERSON HE SEEMS READY TO TALK ABOUT ANYTHING ANY TIME, AND THIS, OF COURSE, CONTRASTS GREATLY WITH THE NORMALLY CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE OF THE AFGHANS WHO WANT ADVANCE PREPARATION AND THE STAGE FULLY SET.

7. COME TO THINK OF IT, THE AFGHANS SHOULDN'T REALLY BE SURPRISED AT THIS SORT OF BEHAVIOR FROM BHUTTO IF THEY THINK BACK. AFGHANISTAN WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY BHUTTO VISITED IN EARLY 1972 AFTER BECOMING PRESIDENT. AT THAT TIME THE AFGHANS WEREN'T EVEN INFORMED HE WAS COMING UNTIL JUST TWO HOURS BEFORE HE TOUCHED DOWN IN KABUL.BYROADE

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